

## General Miscellany.

### THE SONG-SPARROW.

Glimmers gray the leafless thicket  
There, beside the garden gate,  
Where so light from post to picket  
Hops the sparrow, blight, sedate,  
Who, with meekly folded wing,  
Comes to sun himself and sing.

It was there, 'twas there, last year,  
That his little house he built;  
For he seems to perk and peer,  
And to twitter, too, and tilt  
The bare branches in between,  
With a fond, familiar mien.

Once, I know, there was a nest,  
Held there by the side of a trust  
Of those twigs that touch his breast;  
Though 'tis gone now. Some rude gust  
Caught it over-full of snow,  
Bent the bush—and stole it so.

So too our own nests are tossed,  
Ruthless, by the wrecking wind,  
When with stiffening winter's frost,  
Woods we dwell in, green, are thinned  
Of leafage all, and grown too cold  
For wing'd hopes purely summer-souled.

But if we, with spring-days mellow,  
Wake to woful wrecks of change,  
And the sparrow's riotous  
Scolding still an old sweet range;  
Can we do a better thing  
Than, with him, still build and sing?

O, my sparrow, thou dost breed  
Thought in me beyond all telling;  
Shoutest through me sunlight, green,  
And fruitful blessing, with that welling  
Ripple of ecstatic rest,  
Gurgling ever from thy breast!

And thy breathing, breeze-like, stirs  
In my veins a genial flood,  
Such as through the sapwood runs,  
Swells and shapes the pointed bud  
Of the lilac; and beets  
The hollows thick with violets.

Yet I know not any charm  
That can make the fleeting time  
Of thy sylvan, faint alarm  
Suffice to this rough rhyme:  
Still my ruder rhythmic word  
Stiffens thy rare strain, dear bird.

And, however thou hast wrought  
This little joy on heart and brain,  
It is better left untaught  
Take thou up the song again:  
There is nothing said afloat  
On the tide that swells thy throat.

—Scribner's for July.

### THE SUPERVISOR'S STORY.

It was at —, in Yorkshire, that I first met with my friend the supervisor. I had the pleasure of an evening's conversation with him, an evening and a morning, as I may say, for we didn't go to bed all that night, and the tots of toady reached a total that caused Reason to totter on her throne. We were conversing, among other topics, upon Fenianism; and I remarked to my friend the supervisor that I felt a little tender in touching on the theme, for that I didn't exactly know, although I was certain he was a Scotchman, whether he mightn't be an Irishman as well. You'll bear in mind that we'd reached the stage of our "toddly tournament," which might be termed the *meele* (or the mellow, in the vernacular); anyhow, we were getting mixed in our ideas.

And I am not surprised at that same, said Sandy, for I lived many years in Ireland, where I was just a gauger, and I grew so intimate with the Irish that my tongue got a twist that it's never recovered from to this day. I was in a wildish part of the country, up among the bogs of Tipperary. I was just a raw laddie then, upon my approbation, as it were, and I was as active, ye may be sure, routing about the country hunting for stills and shebeens, "searching about wives' barrels," trying to spear out something that might be a feather in my cap, and bring me speedy promotion. But never a drop of potheen or the whiff of a still I could come across, though they were swarming about me like the whiffles.

But one day, as I sat on the top of a bit of hill looking over the wild country, and thinking of the braes o' Kirkcubright, I spied a man coming along a wee bit track over the moor, and he was as foin as the laird o' Craigharroch.

He was a stranger to the parts, too, and didn't know the face of me, and he came rolling and slithering along to where I was sitting.

"God save you, friend!" said I.

"The s-saints purtect you!" said my friend.

"It's the decent drop o' liquor you get up there beyant."

"Be me soul, it is."

"And it's a decent goosoon that sells it," I went on.

"Indeed he is."

"Will there be a drop left in the jug up beyant?"

"There's lashings of it."

"Maybe ye'd like a drop more of that same?"

"Indeed I would."

"Then I'll be for treating you, friend," and I linked my arm with his, and away we went over hill and dale, while we came to a lone hut in a bit bog or dingle, where there was a reek of peat smoke, and a bit of a humming noise that was the poor fellows inside singing. Well, my friend gave a sort of countersign that I couldn't see the trick of, and he and I both walked in and sat down on a heap of turfs by the floor, and called for the potheen, and I paid for it, and never a one of them was the wiser. But they hadn't got the still there. I found that out; it was up among the bogs somewhere, and I was hoping they'd drop something that'd give me a line to where it was, when all of a sudden there dropped in a little man, a grocer from the town, and the shine from the door as it opened upon me lit up my face, and in the surprise of the moment he sang out,

"Lads, ye've got the gauger among ye!"

There was a great kish of turf just behind me, and before I could stir a hand, somebody had clapped it over me like an extinguisher, and what with the dust of the turf, and the reek and the stink, I didn't come to my senses for a minute or two; and when I popped my head out of the basket, never a soul was there but the old grandmother snoring away in her old chair by the fire.

But though they saved their still, they couldn't get over the selling of the drink; that was plain enough against them; against Terence McCarthy, that is, who lived in the cabin. He was just the cat's-paw of the men that worked the still; but he got all the punishment, more's the pity! Well, I summoned Terence, and got him lined a hundred pounds; and as there was nothing in the world in his hut but the old turf kish as I had kicked the bottom out of, and his grandmother's chair that had been thatched with a bit of oat

straw, I took out a body-warrant, as we call it, and made up my mind I'd have to take my friend to Dublin Castle.

Now, Ireland's a different country altogether from this; and after we'd had our sessions, and the magistrates had signed the warrant against poor Terence, we went into the public-house close by—the whole lot of us, magistrates and all—and began to drink whisky like fish.

"Sandy, me boy," said Mike Hackett—ye remember Mike?—"Sandy, isn't it trembling ye are with apprehension?" He was very particular in his conversation, was Mike. "Isn't it shaking ye are, from the crown of your occiput to the very phalanxes of your pedals, at the job ye've got in hand to incarcerate Terence McCarthy?"

"They say 'twas he that shot the ballif," shouted one.

"Divil a one that he murdered the sheriff's officer," cried another.

"Come," I said at last, getting rather cross the way they were chaffing me—"come, I'll bet a gallon of potheen with any sportsman in the room that I'll take the boy to Dublin Castle myself."

"Done with you!" cried a dozen voices.

And I was booked for about a hoghead of whisky before I knew where I was. But I wouldn't go back; only when the excitement of drink was out of me, I felt as if I'd a deal rather have left it undone, for they were a wild lot were the McCarthys, and it was a wild country they lived in.

It was nearly a week before I could get across from Shillsluo to Terence McCarthy's cabin, which was in the barony of Tullabardine.

It was just the dusk of the evening I got to the top of the hill that looked over Terence's cabin; and a dismal hole it seemed, that same little hag or dingle. There was a bit of pool of black bog-water at one end of it, and at the other was Terence's cabin—just a heap of turf, with a hole for the smoke to come out.

If it wasn't for being laughed at, I'd have gone back. Well, I dropped down into the hollow, and walked up to the cabin. The door was opened; and the thought came back to me for the moment that they'd all gone off; and pleased I'd have been for that. But no; there was a bit fire in the corner, and in the darkness I could just see some people crouching down, and the old grandmother sitting in her chair by the peat fire.

"God save all here!" I said as I walked in.

"Save ye kindly!" replied a gruff voice from the corner.

And with that I sat down on the old kish that had been filled with turf, and pulled out my pipe and began to smoke. I could distinguish objects now in the gloom. There was just a heap of children in the corner, with an old rag covering them, sleeping just as sweetly, too, as if they'd been wrapped in down; and there was the mother of them with the baby at her breast, and Terence lying doubled up with his head in his bosom; but never another soul in the hut.

"Take a draw of a pipe, mon," said I; "and don't be downhearted."

I gave him my bag of tobacco, and he found a pipe in the corner, and he began to smoke.

"Ye'll no have a wee drap whisky in the house?" I said.

"Divil a drap your hanner's left us," said the man, dryly.

"Take a pull at my flask, then," said I.

And Terence took it and drank. Somehow I felt more comfortable then. I was safe as long as I was inside the cabin.

"I suppose you know what I've come here for, Terence?" I said, after a while.

As though this had been a preconcerted signal, the wife burst out with loud lamentations; the old grandmother raised a feeble "wirru, wirru!" rocking herself backward and forward in her chair; the children in the corner, aroused by the noise, began to wail and cry; and the little babe at the breast howled dismally in concert.

"Oh, what will we do, what will we do? Oh, Terry, Terry, will ye leave the children to starve, and the babe that hangs to me breast? Ochone! Ochone!"

"Whisht, woman, d'ye hear? Mayhap it isn't so bad as we think. Mayhap his hanner will give us a week or two, while the praties come out of the ground, and—"

"I can't do it, Terence; it's a Queen's job, you know."

"And if the Queen were spoken to, yer hanner," said the woman—"she'd had babes of her own—she wouldn't take the husband away from me that wasn't to blame at all, except with being too good-natured with those two black villans—"

"Hold your tongue, Bridget!" shouted Terence, interrupting her.

"There's a way," I said. "If Terence will show me the road to the still up among the bogs, he'll be let off his imprisonment, and happen get twenty pounds into the bargain."

"Oh, Terence, darling, do you hear that? Do you hear what his hanner tells you? Go on to your knees, Terence, and thank his hanner!"

But I saw Terence was not to be shaken; he thrust away from him the clinging arms of his wife.

"Do you know that it's an informer he wants me to be? I'm ready to go," he said, getting up and coming toward me. "Come along, yer hanner, afore my heart breaks entirely."

"All right, Terence; we must walk across to where the Dublin road crosses the tail of the bog. We shall have plenty of time to catch the coach."

"Is it the coach I'll have to go by? Won't it cost a power of money?"

"Seventeen shillings the fare, two shillings the coachman, a shilling for refreshment; you'll cost the country a pound altogether, Terence."

"A pound, your hanner! a whole pound! a golden sovereign to take the likes of me to prison? Oh, your hanner," said Terence, his face lighting up all of a sudden. "If ye'd only give the pound to the mistress, to keep the children and the babes while I lie in the jail, I'd run by the side, yer hanner; ye should never take your eyes off me. Ah, I'd bless your hanner all the days of my life, and the children would learn to pray for you, and the old mother that's almost in the grave shall entreat the Queen of Heaven for your soul."

I was young and soft-hearted then; I couldn't withstand the sight of so much distress. I gave him the sovereign, which he handed over to his wife. "Now, Terence, I said, 'I shall stop for your honor. By ten o'clock to-morrow morning you must be at Dublin Castle gate; if you fall me, I'm ruined by my kindness to you.'"

"I'll be there, your hanner, by the holy cross," said Terence, crossing himself devoutly, to give effect to his words. I didn't feel comfortable either, but I wouldn't go back from my word; so I made my way across the heath. Terence showed me my way till we came in sight of the Dublin road, a white streak in the darkness, and then he went loping on his way by some inscrutable tracks across the hills.

After I'd waited some time, the coach came up; the front seats were full, and I took my place behind, where there was nobody but an old woman, who was fast asleep, propped up by some boxes. I seated myself beside the old woman, and went to sleep too. The coach stopped at Monmellick to change, and that roused me, and then I heard my own name called.

"M'Allister! Saunders! M'Allister! are you there?"

"Sure enough I am," I said, jumping up and rubbing my eyes. "who wants me?"

A man clambered up to the roof of the coach with a dark lantern in his hand, which he flashed full upon me and the old woman—still asleep.

"Ye've got your prisoner all right, then," said the man.

"What do you know about the prisoner?" said I, sulkily; "and what do you mean by routing a fellow about just as he's comfortably settled?"

"Oh!" says he, loftily; "no Aairs with me; I'm your new supervisor!"

Now I'd written just a note to our supervisor, old Blathery, a decent old fellow as ever lived: "Dear Bladler, I'm going to take a prisoner to Dublin to-night, and as I come back I'll come and see you, and we'll have a gey willie waught for auld lang syne."

"Yes," said the man, a tallow-candle-looking kind of chap, with big teeth, that made quite a shine, as you may say. "Yes, I'm your new supervisor, and I'm astonished that you should make so free with your superior officer as to write such a letter to him as that I got to-night. But I'm glad to see you've got your prisoner all right. I'm going up to Dublin too. I've got a prisoner, and there's nobody else to take him, so I am going myself."

"Why, where's Blathery?" said I.

"Suspended; sure to be dismissed."

"And Tompkins and Jones, the officers?"

"Suspended too."

"Gude save us!" said I; "and what's that for?"

"I can't tell ye all, but I can tell you this much: they were constantly taking prisoners to Dublin Castle, and getting paid for their coach fare and expenses, and all the while they'd be driving them up in carts they'd borrow from their friends for nothing; and there was one impudent fellow made his prisoner walk, and claimed his fare just the same."

"And was it for that they suspended 'em?"

"Wasn't it enough—to be defrauding the Revenue? I'm glad to see ye've got your man safe alongside you, for, by Jingo! if I'd caught you at those tricks, I'd have been the dismissal of you."

Well, I felt my heart go down into my boots. What on earth was I to do? Sure enough, the next time the old woman woke, I'd be discovered, and then what would be the end of it? I'd be dismissed in disgrace, and ruin my prospects for life; and then poor Katie Stewart, who was waiting for me up in Kirkcaldy, waiting till I'd get my next rise in my salary—oh, whatever would I do! Just catch me doing a work of mercy and charity again! "O Lord!" I said breathing a mental prayer, "let me off this once; I'll never offend any more."

The supervisor—Chandler his name was, queer enough, seeing he was for all the world, as I have said before, just like a tallow-candle—he clambered up with his prisoner to where I was sitting, and took his place just opposite me, at the very back of the coach, you know, with his face to the horses. Just the jerk of starting the coach woke up the old woman, and she, looking about in wonder for a moment, threw her arms up and began to cry.

"Oh, sure I'm past the place entirely! Oh, sure I'm left behind! Oh, I'll never find my way back!" and she tried to jump off the coach.

I threw my arms round her and held her down; but the more I held her the more she struggled, till in the end I managed to pinion her arms, and fairly overpowered, she became quiet at last.

Mr. Chandler was all of a shake.

"W-what's the meaning of that extraordinary scene?" he cried.

"Prisoner trying to escape," I said.

"Bless me, that was a very courageous resistance on your part. I'll make a note of that," and Chandler pulled out a big note-book; but, between the jerking of the coach and the shaking of his hands, he couldn't write a word. However, it wasn't long before we were at Portarlington, which I was thankful to see. I was tired of hugging my old woman. What I'd do after that I didn't know. But as luck would have it, the moment the coach stopped, Chandler leaped down.

"I'll get a drop of something hot," he cried, "to stop this shivering. Look after the prisoners, M'Allister."

"Mother, ain't you thankful to me I saved your life?" I said to the old woman, unclasping my embrace. She gave me a look and a curse, and stepped off the coach. And then a bright thought came into my brain. "Come over here," I said to the prisoner opposite, who had been stolidly looking on; "you'll be warmer and more comfortable in this corner, and you'll get a bit of sleep, perhaps."

The man came over, and sat down in the corner the old woman had vacated.

"What's your name?"

"Andrew McCarthy."

"How much have they give you?" I asked him.

"Six months."

"Now, my lad," I said, quickly, "would you rather two months' imprisonment as a crown debtor, living on the best of everything, or your six months on prison fare?"

"Why, I'd take the two, av course."

"Then you've only got to change your name from Andrew to Terence. Will you do it?"

"That I will, your hanner," said the man, with a grin. I think he divined my purpose.

"Hi! hi! hi! Halloo! halloo! halloo! Stop! stop!" I began hallooing and shouting with all my might, and all the passengers and the coachman, and Chand-

ler among the lot, came tumbling out of the inn.

"He's gone!" I cried; "your prisoner's gone!"

"Why didn't you stop him?"

"How could I hold the two of them?" I roared.

Andrew, entering into the spirit of the scene, began to struggle violently, and I threw my arms about him, and held him down.

"Which way did he go?" roared Chandler.

"Down Montmellick way!"

Away went Chandler, his long legs flying out behind him, his skirts fluttering in the breeze, till he disappeared in the outer darkness. I need hardly say that the sympathy of the public was with the escaping prisoner.

"What should we wait for him for?" said the coachman, clambering up into his seat, and looking over the back of the coach; "we can't stop the coach for him."

"Go on!" shouted all the passengers.

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